

FAITH IN CHRIST'S ABILITY

NO. 3302

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"Jesus saith unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this?"
Matthew 9:28

[Other sermons by Mr. Spurgeon upon verses twenty-seven to thirty are #1355, Our Lord's Question to the Blind Men and #1560, The Plain Man's Pathway to Peace]

I WANT to lay special emphasis on the word "this" in the text, "Believe ye that I am able to do *this*?" The question of Jesus referred to one particular thing, it was not intended to apply to the general power of Christ to heal the sick or to raise the dead, but it concerned the specific malady from which those two men were suffering, and the question meant, did they believe that Christ was able to cure their blindness?

Among professing Christians, there is much so-called faith that is not really faith. Many of us profess much more in our creeds than we believe in our hearts, and we hold a great deal more in theory than we do in reality. For instance, I suppose there is no professor of religion here who would dispute the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to do anything and everything, we believe that He has all power in heaven and in earth, and yet, if it came to be a matter of personal detail and He said to us, "Believe ye that I am able to do *this*?" we might not all be able to answer as promptly and as confidently as the blind men did, "Yea, Lord."

I. I am going to speak about this matter, and I start with the very simple statement that FAITH, IN SO FAR AS IT IS TRUE, DEALS IMMEDIATELY WITH THE CASE IN HAND.

True faith believes that Jesus Christ is "able to do *this*." It believes, of course, that He is able to do twenty thousand other things, but *it believes specially that He is "able to do this"*—to forgive this sin of which I am so deeply conscious, to remove this trial with which I am now so sorely afflicted, to sustain me under this temptation which so fiercely assails me, to strengthen me to accomplish this duty which so clearly devolves upon me. As each special case arises, faith will exercise itself upon that particular thing and believe that Christ is "able to do *this*."

There are solemn thoughts connected with unbelief concerning "this" which Christ is able to do. Over there is a brother who is in such a plight that he thinks there is no way of deliverance for him out of it. He has a task before him which he hardly dares ask his Lord to enable him to perform because he lacks the necessary faith in his Lord's power and willingness to help him.

Now, my dear friend, as you are in doubt in this case, I want to ask you what is to prevent you from doubting in the next difficulty that occurs to you, and then in the next after that, and so on. You say that it is only upon this one point that you are in doubt, and that you think you have very good reasons for not believing in this particular case, but the next circumstance that occurs to you will very probably furnish you with just as weighty reasons for doubting, and so will it be with each succeeding case as it arises.

It seems to me that you are shut up to this alternative, either to trust God in this case or else to confess that you do not intend to believe Him in any case. I know you will urge that the present case is a very peculiar one, but I shall remind you that the next one will also be a very peculiar one.

I have not lived as long as some of you have, but during the years that I have been able to observe what has been passing around me, I have noticed that every year of my life has been a crisis in the affairs of the nation, at least so the papers have always told us, and so have some good people always told us. I think it is very likely that the present time is a most solemn crisis, and I also think with equally good reason, that this is a most solemn crisis in your history, and that if you do not believe now, you are not likely to believe in the next crisis that comes to you.

The fact is, you must either believe God always or you must never believe Him. If you think Christ is not “able to do *this*”—forgive this sin, remove this trial, overcome this temptation, or strengthen you for this duty—you will probably think the same when the next testing times comes.

Moreover, it seems to me that *if you doubt God concerning any one trial, you give up the whole case*. You would have me believe that your present trial is very peculiar and strange. Well, suppose I admit that it is, yet still, if you do not believe concerning *this*, you have given up the whole case, for what Christ claims is omnipotence, and if there be any one thing that He cannot do, then He is not omnipotent. If there be any one heart too hard for Him to break, if there be any one sin too strong for Him to enable me to abandon it, then He is not omnipotent.

If you look this thought fairly in the face, I think you will scarcely dare to rob your Lord of one of the most glorious of His attributes. You would surely hesitate to put forth that right hand of yours to snatch from His crown one of its most precious gems, no, you would sooner lose your life than commit so traitorous a crime as that, yet you do practically commit it if you do not believe that He is “able to do *this*,” whatever “this” may be, and henceforth you do virtually say that He is not almighty.

Besides, *your doubt concerning God's power sets up a new god*. Do you start in alarm at that statement? It is true, for that which is mightiest in the world is God, but if there be anything which surpasses the power of God, something that is more potent than omnipotence, that something must be god! I only put the matter thus to show you that you are obliged to believe that God can deliver you out of your present desperate plight, or else you must become an idolater, you must feel that your difficulties and trials are greater than God, and therefore you deify them! Of course you do not mean to do that, you feel a cold shiver go through you at the bare thought of such blasphemy, yet you practically do it whenever you doubt that God is “able to do *this*,” whatever “this” may be.

Further, to doubt God's power to do “this,” whatever it may be, *is impugning every attribute of the divine character*. I could prove this if I had the time, but I will indicate only one attribute of God, that is, His truthfulness.

Take such a promise as this, “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble,” now, if you doubt God's power to fulfill that promise, you practically impugn His veracity. Can you calmly contemplate such a sin as that would be? Yet it seems to me that you cannot avoid committing that sin unless now, by simple faith, you believe that He is “able to do *this*.” But grant that God is omnipotent, once really accept that truth in your heart, and then you will feel that there remains no strait into which you can be brought out of which He cannot deliver you, and that there is no temptation which may assail you from which He cannot preserve you, and that there can be no position of peril in which He cannot protect you, and out of which He cannot bring you unharmed.

May the Holy Spirit graciously reveal to us the unsafe, treacherous, boggy pit that would swallow us up if we doubt that God is “able to do *this*,” and may He enable us to realize that it is safe walking and happy walking when we walk by faith!

II. My second statement, which is as simple as the first, is that TRUE FAITH, ESPECIALLY IN THE MATTER OF SALVATION, MUST BE PERSONAL.

If I have any true faith in Christ at all, I must believe that He is “able to do *this*,” that is, that He is able to do for me what He has done for many who are now in glory, and what He is doing for many who are rejoicing in His salvation here on earth. I know that I am addressing many who believe in the Bible, at least you say that you do, and that you believe that Jesus Christ is able to do everything. That is the theory of your faith, yet you do not believe *this*, that Jesus Christ is able now to save you. You have got

an idea in your mind, that for some reason or other, on account of some want of preparation in you, or for some equally foolish reason, the simple act of faith in Christ would not be the means of bringing salvation to your soul. You imagine that your case is not one that is covered by the promise of God, or encompassed by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If that is what you think, that Christ cannot save you, why do you not doubt whether He can save others? In fact, *why do you not doubt whether He can save any sinner who ever lived?* You tell me that your case is a very peculiar one. I will grant you that, but then the case of the next sinner you meet will also be a peculiar one, he is as honest a man as you are, and he will tell you that there is something very peculiar about his case. I have very seldom talked with any person under conviction of sin who did not think that his case was different from that of anybody else, and very surprised has he been when I have told him that his words just described my own experience when I was under conviction of sin.

If you believe that Christ cannot save you because of some peculiarity in your case, is it not equally reasonable or unreasonable that you should believe that He cannot save another sinner because of some peculiarity in his case? In this way you would soon get to believe that Jesus Christ cannot save at all.

"No," you say, "I shall never believe that." But that is practically what you do believe. You do not believe that Jesus Christ is a potent Savior, you may think that you do, but if the matter were put to the test, and you regarded every other sinner's case as you regard your own, there would be just as good reason to suppose every other case to be hopeless as to conclude that there is no hope of salvation for yourself. If you are strictly reasonable in your belief, you must either believe that Christ can save you or that He can save nobody at all.

Then, as I said before under the previous head, *if you do not believe that Christ can save you, you give up the whole case.* You have probably all of you held, as one of the undisputed articles of the Christian faith, that Christ is omnipotent, but supposing that your case is one in which His blood has no cleansing efficacy, supposing that you are so vile that He cannot and will not receive you, supposing that your heart is so hard that He cannot soften it, then He is not omnipotent. That is as clear as anything can be, for here is a case that has defied and defeated Him.

Oh! tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, that there is a man here who professes to believe the Bible, yet he holds that Christ is not omnipotent. "Oh!" you say, "I do not hold that." But you do practically hold it, for if you thought Him to be omnipotent, you must conclude that He is "able to do *this*," that is, to save you.

More than that, *disbelieving Christ's power to save in your own case is virtually making yourself god.* "Oh, no!" you say in horror at the bare mention of such a thing, "I never did that." Stay a moment and let me prove it to you. You believe that there is something in you which cannot be overcome by divine power, you think that there is something in you which makes it impossible that you can be saved.

Now listen, the most mighty of all forces must belong to Deity, but if there be in you some force of wickedness, some hardness of heart, some obstinate willfulness which you imagine God really cannot overcome, then you are practically making out that the evil in you is more powerful than omnipotence and greater than God!

Is not this very strange, as well as very wicked? You thought you were making yourself out to be very humble, but it turns out that you are very proud, lifting up yourself to the very throne of God, and seeking to usurp His place. This is what you are practically doing when you assume that Christ is not "able to do *this*," that is, to save you.

My dear friend, look at the enormous guilt in which such unbelief would involve you, and start back from it with the utmost abhorrence, and believe that Christ is mighty to save, yea, that He is almighty to save even you.

I say again, as I said upon the first part of my subject, *this unbelief of yours impugns all the divine attributes.* In believing that Christ cannot save *you*, you are dishonoring the character of God in the person of His well-beloved Son, for you have set a limit to His power although He said that all power in heaven and in earth had been given to Him.

When He asks, "Is my arm shortened that it cannot save you?" you answer, "Yes, Lord." When He says, "Is my ear heavy that it cannot hear your cry?" you reply, "Yes, Lord." You may not dare to say it with your lips, but you really mean it in your heart, and that is even worse. You are denying the truth of Christ's promise. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," yet you say, "Lord, I would come to You, but I should never get any rest. I would trust You, but I should never be saved."

You suppose either that Christ has promised more than He can perform, not knowing that He was doing so, which is impugning His omniscience, or that He has deliberately promised more than He knew that He could do, which is impugning His truthfulness and honor. He has commanded that this message should be preached to every creature in all the world, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." He also said that "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." This is His declaration concerning every believing soul, so that if you believe on Him, it is not possible that your case could be beyond the limit of His power to save.

I am not talking now about His willingness to save, if I were, I would speak just as confidently, but just now I am referring to His power. Christ's own question to you, my dear friend, is the same that He put to the blind men, "Believest ye that I am able to do this?"—that is, to save you. Think of the solemn consequences of unbelief, see how shamefully it maligns and slanders the character of Jesus, and then may His gracious Spirit sweetly constrain you to believe that He is "able to do *this*," and to save even you!

After Christ had cured these blind men, He healed a dumb man who was possessed with a devil, and the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel." I wonder if there is one here who thinks himself the biggest sinner in the world, the most hardened, the most hopeless. If so, and he believes in Jesus, Jesus will save him, and then he also will be able to say, "It was never so seen in Israel." I know that when I found peace through believing in Jesus, I thought that it had never been so seen in Israel, and I have met with many others who have felt just the same about their own conversion.

Well, supposing that it was never so seen in Israel, then there are new honors and fresh glories for Immanuel, and there is no reason why it should not be seen here tonight. At any rate, I pray God to show you the inconsistency of professing to believe the Bible, and yet thinking that for some reason or other, or for all the reasons in the world put together, Christ is unable to save you.

III. My third statement, which is as simple as the first and second were, is that IN ALL MATTERS AFFECTING THE SOUL, THE VITAL QUESTION IS THAT OF FAITH.

"Believest thou that I am able to do this?" must be the vital question concerning a soul's salvation, personal faith with regard to Christ's power to save must be the main matter. Jesus did not say to these blind men, "Have you a proper sense of your blindness? Are you sufficiently sensible of the deprivation from which you suffer through the loss of your eyesight? Do you feel the degradation of the poverty which compels you to beg? Have you wept, and bemoaned, and groaned, and grieved because you cannot see?"

No such questions as these were put to them by our Lord, but He simply asked them, "*Believe ye that I am able to do this?*" There are various questions that many of you ask yourselves although Christ never puts them to you, His one inquiry is, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" If you can answer that question satisfactorily, you need not trouble about your own queries.

You will notice too, that *Christ did not ask the blind men whether they loved Him*. He did not say to them, "I am not going to do anything for you unless your hearts are burning with love to Me." Oh, no! it would have been clean contrary to our Savior's nature to say to these men, "Are you really fond of Me? Then I will do what you desire." So, sinner, Christ does not ask you whether you love Him, because He knows that you do not, yet you ask yourself this question again and again, "Do I love the Lord or no? Am I a lover of Jesus? I have heard His people say that they love Him, but do I love Him?"

Now, this is a very proper question for you to ask yourself after you have believed in Jesus, but you must have the root-grace of faith first before you begin to look for its fruits. I hope that you will

afterwards attain to that burning, fervent love that many advanced believers have to Jesus, but this is not the matter that concerns you just now.

The question that Jesus puts to you now is, "Believest thou that I am able to do this? Believest thou that I can take thy sins away, and make thee clean tonight? Believest thou that I can take away thy heart of stone, and give thee a heart of flesh? Believest thou that I can turn thee, a lion, into a lamb? Believest thou that I can give thee the grace of repentance though thou canst not repent without My aid? Dost thou believe that I am able to do all that needs to be done in order to save thee?"

This is the question Christ asks you now. I trust the time will come when He will say to you, "Lovest thou me?" and that then you will be able truthfully to answer, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

There was another question which Christ did not put to the blind men, he did not say to them, "*Have you feared whether you would ever have your sight?*" Have you been frightened at the thought that you may have to grope about in darkness and poverty all your days? Have you been in such despair that you have almost feared that you would commit suicide unless your blindness could be cured?" No, Christ did not ask any such questions as these, His one inquiry was, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"

Friends tell us sometimes about the terrors they have experienced before they came to Christ by simple faith, but it would be quite wrong on our part to conclude that such terrors are necessary, I believe that they are never necessary, and that they are seldom useful, it certainly cannot be right to put them in the place of faith in Christ.

Dear friend, I wish that you would answer the Master's question, and leave all other matters alone until He asks you about them. He does not question you concerning your fears and your terrors, the ploughing and harrowing law work of which some brethren are so fond of talking, His first question is, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" Give Him an answer, and may the Holy Spirit enable you to give the right reply, "Yea, Lord," even as the blind men did when Christ put a similar question to them!

The vital matter is faith in Jesus. "Do you believe on the Son of God?" O sinner, how glad and thankful I should be if I knew that you were saying in your heart, "I do believe that Christ is both able and willing to save me, and I cast myself into His arms now."

If you have really done that, you are saved, and now you know, and feel, and rejoice in His power to save all those who come unto God by Him. Trust in Jesus, for this is the vital sign by which we discern those who are chosen of the Father, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus. If you truly believe in Jesus, you are born of God, you need not fear that you shall ever perish, but you may even now rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

IV. I close with this fourth observation, that THIS QUESTION IS ONE WHICH WE MIGHT NATURALLY HAVE CONCLUDED THAT JESUS WOULD ASK.

It was a vitally important question, and it was by no means an unreasonable one. *If the blind men had not believed that Jesus was "able to do this," they would not have asked Him to have mercy upon them.* It would have been an impertinence on their part, or something worse than that, if they had pleaded for mercy, and yet had not believed that He was able to grant it to them. I should not feel pleased if a blind man came to me and said, "Will you be so good as to open my eyes?" I should feel morally certain that he was mocking me, for he would know as well as I do that I have not the power to give sight to the blind.

Now, dear friends, some of you have been praying to the Lord to have mercy upon you, so you see that you have committed yourselves just as these blind men had. You have not told anybody about it, possibly it was behind the hedge, or up in the hayloft, or in that little bedroom of yours where no one but God could see you. Well then, how did you dare to pray thus if you did not believe that the Lord could do for you what you asked of Him? You did not mean to insult Him, did you? I think the very fact of your praying drives you to the conclusion that you do believe that He is "able to do this." If you do not, you must not pray any more.

"Oh!" you say, "I cannot help praying." I am glad you cannot, and I hope you never will cease praying, but if you go on praying, yet do not believe in Christ's power to save you, it is very much like a mockery of the Savior, for how can you pray with any sort of justification unless you can truly say, "O Lord, I do believe that Thou art able to save, and able to save even me"? I do not know whether the blind men at first fully believed in the deity of Jesus, but I assume that all of us hold that He is "very God of very God."

I hope none of you have been led astray by the false doctrine that Christ is a mere man. You believe that He is the Son of God, so what is more reasonable than that He should say to you, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" You must give up your belief that He is divine or else you must believe that He is able to do *this*, that is, to save you. I have already shown you that omnipotence is essential to deity, so if you doubt that Christ is omnipotent, I do not see how you can believe that He is the Son of God, but inasmuch as you say that you do believe that He is the Son of God, and I have no reason to question your veracity, how can it be a question with you whether He is able to save you?

Besides, you know that *Christ has saved a great many other people*, and this should encourage you to believe that He can save you. The blind men had probably heard of His miracles of mercy, and so were stimulated to cry to Him on their own account. You have seen the change that Christ has wrought in some of your relatives or friends, and this being the case, Christ certainly has the right to expect that you should believe that what He was able to do for them He is also able to do for you.

Your case is not by any means as peculiar as you imagine, it can easily be matched by others where Christ's power to save has been abundantly proved. If you are a drunkard, we can produce drunkards who have been saved by Christ. If you are a swearer, we can show you swearers who have been saved by Christ. If you are a harlot, we can bring harlots who have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus, and who are now living chaste and holy lives. If, on the other hand, you have led an outwardly moral life, and cannot feel the deep conviction of sin that others have experienced, if you say, with Cowper—

*"I hear, but seem to hear in vain,
Insensible as steel;
If aught is felt, 'tis only pain
To find I cannot feel;"—*

we can find plenty of cases to match yours. Suppose you have a bad leg and you go to a doctor and say to him, "Doctor, you see what is the matter with my leg, but I don't believe you can cure it." He would certainly not feel flattered by your doubt concerning his skill, yet he might say to you, "Well, it so happens that I have had many cases exactly like yours, and in every instance the remedies I have prescribed have been the means of producing a complete cure."

If, after that, you still persist in saying that you do not believe the doctor can cure you, he would be fully justified in saying to you, "Then I think your unbelief is very unreasonable. Here in my book I have the record of many cases almost identical with yours, and as I was able to cure them, I have no doubt that I can cure you if you will only commit yourself to my hands, and do as I tell you."

In a similar manner, I venture to say that there is not a case in this house, there is not a case in the whole world to which there has not been a very close parallel in which the power of Christ has already been displayed, and therefore He has the right to ask every unsaved soul, "Believest thou that I am able to do this for thee?"

My dear hearer, I can most confidently assure you that He is "able to do this." I know the ways of unbelief, for I have trodden them, but oh! happy, happy, happy day when I understood my Savior's grace and power at least in some degree, when I saw that, although I was a sinner, He came to save sinners; and although I was black, His precious blood was able to wash me whiter than snow; and although I was naked, His righteousness supplied me with a robe in which I might even dare to appear

before God; and although I was spiritually dead, His Holy Spirit was given to quicken me, and make me live forever.

Thus in Christ all my soul's needs were fully met, and desperate as my case had appeared to myself, I had proved as so many before me and since have also proved that "with God all things are possible." May you come to the same conclusion, dear friend, and cast yourself now upon the naked promise of God, made in covenant with Christ, and ratified by His most precious blood. If He does not save you when you trust Him, this Bible is not true. If any soul can truly trust Him, and then be a castaway, I have no Gospel to preach to guilty sinners.

But that can never be the case, for He has Himself declared—oh that I could pronounce the words as He uttered them!—"him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Come then, every one of you, and prove the truth of His blessed promise, and so you shall be saved, and He shall have the glory forever and ever. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 9:18-38

Verse 18. *While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.*

This was grand faith on the ruler's part, believing that the touch of Christ's hand would raise his dead daughter to life, we do not wonder that the Savior honored such faith as that at once.

19-20. *And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him and touched the hem of his garment:*

This was while He was on the way to the ruler's house. Jesus Christ can work many miracles while He is on the way to work other miracles.

21. *For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole* [See sermon #1809, May 1?].

This also is wonderful faith again, in this chapter we get among the great believers. The man believes that the touch of Jesus can raise the dead, the woman believes that the touch of His garment will make her whole.

22. *But Jesus turned about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour* [See sermon #3020, Good Cheer from Grace Received].

Christ never comes short of our faith, but He often goes beyond it.

23. *And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,—*

These were hired men and women who were brought in to act as mourners.

24-25. *He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, He went in,—*

There is a good deal that has to be "put forth" before the Lord Jesus Christ will fully reveal His power to bless. He would have you put forth your doubts, your fears, your wandering thoughts, your self-trust, in fact, everything that is contrary to His righteous rule. "When the people were put forth, He went in,"—

25-27. *And took her by the hand, and the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land. And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.*

See how busy our Lord was, and how ready for every application that was made to Him, and note how He adapted His power to every case that came before Him. First He heals an issue of blood, then

He raises the dead, and now He is ready to open blind eyes. I wish the Lord might have such blessed business among us here, and He may have, for if you will cry to Him for your child, dead in trespasses and sins, He will make her live, if you will bring your blind eyes to Him, He will open them, and if you will come to Him with a disease that is sapping your very life, He will heal you. Give the Lord plenty of this holy work to do. Drawn wells, they say, are sweetest, and a Savior who is constantly used is most enjoyed.

28. *And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?*

That is the question the Lord puts to any who are in soul trouble. “‘Believe ye that I am able to do this?’—to forgive your sins once and for all—to give you a new nature at this very moment—to make you, a sinner, into a saint—to save you, not merely for the next few weeks, but to save you eternally so that you shall see My face in glory with exceeding joy—‘Believe ye that I am able to do this?’”

28-29. *They said unto him, Yea, Lord. Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.*

That is what Jesus says to every person here, “According to your faith be it unto you.” If you believe Christ a little, He will bless you a little, but if you believe Him up to the hilt, He will bless you to the full. Your faith shall never outrun the manifestations of divine love. Believest thou this? Then you shall see it. “According to your faith be it unto you.”

30-32. *And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.*

These miracles were worked so rapidly, and they concerned such different cases, that as we read of them, we rejoice to see how Christ was ready for anything, and ready for everything. It did not matter what case was brought to Him, He was never taken aback. Here He is just as fully prepared to heal the dumb as just now He was to cure the blind.

33. *And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake:*

There is nothing like going at once to the root of the matter. Christ did not heal the dumb man, and leave the devil in him, but He first cast the devil out and then “the dumb spake.” And this is His way of saving men. He renews them by His Spirit, He casts the devil out, and then their despair goes, their prayerlessness disappears, their love of vice is killed. All evil is expelled when once the root of the evil is pulled up. “When the devil was cast out, the dumb spake:”—

33. *And the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel* [See sermon #2482, An Unparalleled Cure]

Christ had wrought such miracles as the multitudes had never before seen, and they might well marvel.

34-35. *But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils. And Jesus went about all the cities and villages,—*

What the Pharisees said was of such very small consequence, that for the time being, Christ vouchsafed them no answer but this, “Jesus went about all the cities and villages.” In like manner, it will be your best plan not to reply to slander. There are some lies that smell so strongly of the pit from which they came that everybody will recognize their origin, and therefore you need not take the trouble to point out that they are falsehoods. And the best reply to all scandal and slander is to go on with your work just as if you had never heard it. The Pharisees said that Christ cast out devils through the prince of the devils, and the very next sentence is, “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages,”—

35-36. *Teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them,—*

Yet Christ, while upon the earth in the flesh, never saw such multitudes as are gathered in London today, He never saw such multitudes as make up this nation, there never passed before the eyes of the

Redeemer such multitudes as are crowded together in China and India today. No, the population of the world has wondrously increased since those days, so what must be the compassion of His heart when He sees the multitudes that are living in the world today? “When he saw the multitudes he was moved”—in the original, this is a very striking word, it signifies that He trembled with emotion, His inmost powers were moved, His heart was stirred “with compassion on them,”—

36-37. *Because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;*

Not the preachers, but the laborers are few, not the talkers, but the labourers—the patient, plodding, resolute, disinterested, industrious toilers who really go in for winning souls for Christ—the men and women who do real work for God, and do not play at Christian service as some do, making it a kind of amusement to go and do some little good now and then, it is these *laborers* who are few. You know the difference between a dock laborer, or a farm laborer, and the gentleman who takes a tool in his hand just for a pastime now and then.

38. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest* [See sermon #1127, Harvest Men Wanted]

It is earnest workers that we are to pray God to thrust forth into His harvest, for still the harvest is plenteous, and the laborers are few.

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